

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MARCH 11, 2014
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by City Council on March 11, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Bobby L. Davis presided. Council members Michael Baker, Ronald Atkinson, Ralph Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Emerson Hunt and Joseph Frazier were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Pam Jones, and Attorney Kenneth Davis.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order and Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Davis welcomed citizens, guests and the press. (Hometown TV)

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to accept the minutes from the regular meeting on February 18, 2014, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

Mayor Davis presented the Mayor's Monthly Beautification Award to Mr. & Mrs. Tom and Jeraline Brown for their outstanding efforts in keeping Marion clean and beautiful. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed by residents in their neighborhood and those who pass by and see them diligently keeping the area clean. The Brown's thanked the Mayor for the award and challenged everyone to join them in keeping Marion clean and beautiful.

Dr. Ed Holmes made a presentation from the Department of Defense (ESGR) in recognition of military personnel employed by the City. Certificates were to Mayor Bobby L. Davis, City Administrator Alan Ammons, Police Chief Jim Gray and

Municipal Judge Patricia Speth thanking them for their support of military personnel.

On behalf of the City, Mayor Davis presented Mr. Di'ontrey Gibbons with a personalized "Foxhead" for his outstanding accomplishment of winning the 2014 Lower State Wrestling Championship in the South Carolina High School 1A/2A Division. Mayor Davis offered congratulations and best wishes for Di'ontrey's future endeavors. Di'ontrey thanked the City and commented that he was proud to represent and let everyone know about Marion.

Also on behalf of the City, Mayor Davis presented a personalized "Foxhead" to Mr. Kevin Grant for winning the 2014 State Wrestling Championship in the South Carolina High School 1A/2A Division. He also presented Kevin with a plaque for being named "Most Outstanding Wrestler". Mayor Davis offered congratulations and best wishes for Kevin's future endeavors.

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to allow the Marion County Library use of CD Joyner for their summer programs on June 13th, June 27th and July 18th. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson and carried.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to appoint Mrs. Lucta Gerald to the Historic District Commission to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Jason Hulon, whose appointment will expire May 2016. Councilwoman Odessa Gregg offered a second and the motion carried.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to allow Ms. Wanda Legette use of CD Joyner on March 15th for Relay for Life Pep Rally, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. The motion carried. The Relay for Life Walk is scheduled for April 12, 2014.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Regarding the 1 Cent Capital Projects, Mr. Ammons commented that the City is moving forward with the AC Tollison and Elementary gyms, asbestos and lead-based paint removal is being done. Pre-bid conference with contractors will be Thursday at 2:00 p.m. at AC Tollison. Blueprints are in the office should any Council member wish to review them. This will be a complete renovation of both properties and both should be ready for basketball season.

The debris removal contractors should be back Friday and Saturday to start trimming trees and low hanging limbs; will take approximately 4-5 days, with 10-15 bucket trucks working. After that is complete, will do another sweep of the entire City. Should be finished in next couple of weeks. Things should be back to normal in about 30 days. Mr. Ammons asked for patience from the citizens as there is still a tremendous amount of debris being brought out to be picked up. Mayor Davis commented that we were told that DOT is in charge, they hired the contractors and we were told not to pick up any debris as we would not be reimbursed for it. Mayor Davis further commented that he does want Main Street, Liberty Street and around some of the churches cleaned up at least for now and we will work with the contractors from the state and with our employees to try and finish up. (Mr. Ammons will check and see if we are able to do that). Mr. Ammons has contacted Marion County about the Catfish Creek blockage situation. Years ago we received money to clean out the portion in the City and has asked the County to supply funds to clean out the county portion. Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson stated that there is a problem with trash cans being left out by the street for days at a time and it looks bad. He inquired if we needed an ordinance to move trash cans from the street or if there was a way to address that. The ordinance now in place deals with when the City's sanitation department actually picked up the trash cans from the residents (back) yards and returned them, not with our current situation whereby a contracted company picks the cans up at curbside. Mr. Ammons

responded that there have been several complaints regarding this and with Council's approval, he will work with the City Attorney to get a draft for Council's review.

Cheryl Askins of the Recreation Department was named *February Employee of the Month* and presented with a gift certificate.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

City Attorney Kenneth Davis had nothing to report at this time.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Davis reminded everyone that all departmental reports are sent to Council members in their packets. Mrs. Mary Eaddy of the Citizen's Advisory Committee commented that there of 14 areas spread out over the 6 Council districts and the committee needs the following members: Area 2 – District 1, Area 6 – District 4, Area 9 – District 2. She asked that Council members in these areas recommend someone for the listed areas. Meetings are the 1st Monday of the month at the Marion Fire Department and no meetings are held in June, July and August. No comments from any other committees at this time.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Councilman Baker noted that debris in his area was being picked up now and the guys will be back throughout the week in District 6.

Councilman Frazier commented that things were going well in District 4. The representative from the state will get with him and Mr. Ammons regarding putting up the speed limit sign at McEachern and Dunlop. He questioned why our elections were held in April and not in November when general elections were held. At the MASC meeting, it was mentioned that the state is working on changing the dates so that all elections will be in November. Based on info received from the

City Treasurer, it cost the City approximately \$3,000 to hold an election, plus additional funds if a run-off is needed. He stated that if elections were held in November during general elections, it would not cost the City anything and just wants to throw this out as “food for thought”. Cathedral College will hold Lent Services on Wednesday at the First United Methodist Church on Godbold Street and Councilman Frazier encourages all to attend.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson commented that trash pickup has been a big issue and will pass on what has been said tonight. He commended the choice of the Browns for receiving the Mayor’s Beautification Award as they are very deserving.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg commented that she had received positive feedback from District 5 residents and how appreciative they are for the City’s hard work during the recent bad weather conditions.

Councilman Emerson Hunt thanked the City for their hard work during the debris cleanup. He offered his congratulations to Di’ontrey Gibbons and Kevin Grant for the awards they received earlier and wished them well. Some parents have approached him with their fear that the Boys & Girls Club might be closing. Some say we can’t afford to keep it, but Councilman Hunt stated, ‘we can’t afford not to keep it’, and will fight as hard as he can to keep it.

In response to questions Mayor Davis has received regarding the spot where the old jail stood, he responded that the local VFW is working on a place for our veterans, including our homeless veterans, to go. In addition some programs will also be for our boys and girls in the City of Marion. Mayor Davis commented that this is a good organization and he has been a long time member and is proud to have a veteran’s organization such as this in the City. Anyone, man or woman, is

asked to help the VFW complete the dream they have in terms of helping our community. The state Municipal Update highlighted our Marion County mayors and how they are working to bring Marion County together to work as one. The fact that we are all working together to make Marion County a better place for all citizens, courtesy of the MASC Uptown publication, has now been broadcast statewide. Mayor Davis commented that Dr. Wayne Miller of Cathedral Bible College has been instrumental in getting pastors in the City and County together and his goal is to unite Marion County on the religious side and Mayor Davis's goal is to unite Marion and Marion County. Regarding the elections, Mayor Davis commented that this is an effort by the state to unify the voting process statewide and whether or not we vote on it, the state will likely do this, which will save time, effort and funds for the municipalities. Another historical event took place in Marion this past Saturday wherein the young people in NASA program of Ms. Justine Roberts, Mr. Fred Wilson and staff, built and fired their own rockets at Withlacoochee Park. Mayor Davis encouraged everyone to support this program.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a contractual matter regarding the Boys & Girls Club, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

Upon returning from Executive Session, Mayor Davis stated that no action had been taken. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to return to Open Session, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

Regarding the Boys & Girls Club Agreement, Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to table the lease agreement; asking that the Boys & Girls Club submit a proposal, in reference to the concerns of the residents and children Marion. Councilman Ralph Atkinson inquired if this would be a follow-up to the Mayor meeting with the Boys & Girls Club and an opportunity to clarify a proposal that

was presented by the City and see if there might be some way to negotiate the lease agreement that would be satisfactory to both entities. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker and carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Dolly Boyer gave the Council an update on the Neighborhood Watch in District 4 and what they are doing to help improve their neighborhood. They are trying to obtain a federal tax ID number and 501-C3 status in order to apply for grants and raise money. They are interested in helping get other neighborhood watch group started. The group is asking for \$500 from the City to cover their filing fees and associated costs. Ms. Boyer ended her presentation by quoting a member of their group "It is easier to hold on to our neighborhood than it is to fight to get it back". Councilman Baker asked that this request be put on the next month's agenda and see if Patricia can find funding for this.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded Councilman Ralph Atkinson; motion carried.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis

City Clerk Pam Jones
Taped March 11, 2014